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People with disabilities, especially those with speech disabilities want to have a chance to do things just like their non-disabled friends, families and peers. So when Speech to Speech was developed, they got a chance to use the telephone--many, of course, for the very first time. Unfortunately there are still many out there have still not heard about STS.

There are still lots of problems with Speech to Speech:

- 1) **LENGTH OF CALL:** Operators need to stay on the call long enough to get used to the way people with speech disabilities talk. I know that the users sometimes have to repeat phrases several times before they can be understood.
- 2) **DIALING:** There is a dialing problem. The FCC requires that STS users, like all relay users be able to dial 711 for an STS call. Unfortunately, the providers do not find it cost effective to train the operators to transfer these 711 calls from people with speech disabilities to STS. Basically some providers are ignoring the regulation except when complaints are filed with the FCC.
- 3) **CONFIDENTIALITY:** It is imperative that operators tell callers that everything said is confidential (isn't this the case with the deaf operators).
- 4) **COMPUTER ISSUE:** More people with speech disabilities need to be taught to use STS. All these statements also apply to people who use STS on the computer. The computer issue is that the FCC proposed that STS also be accessible through the internet just like TTY relay is. The program is called Internet Protocol-Speech to Speech or IP-STS. Unfortunately because many potential STS-IP users have a very low income, and are generally unemployed, people this program will fail as proposed. Before STS-IP is to be approved, the FCC must first determine that there are societal mechanisms to provide the necessary equipment (a PC).
- 5) **COMPETITION AMONG PROVIDERS:** There should be competition as because it that makes any service works better.

**6) TRAINING AND PAY:** The operators need good training and need to be paid enough so that they do a good job and have an incentive to have this as a their career.

**7) OUTREACH:** A most important task is to find the consumers who need to use this service. There are many non-profit organizations serving the different populations who could benefit from STS. Schools, hospitals, service organizations, disability specific support orgs, etc but they must be searched out. Then they need to be educated about STS, then they need to be helped to reach their constituents. Plus there should be advertising and public service announcements in the media, articles written for newspapers newsletters, and magazines, etc.